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A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS

THE SMELL OF FRESH PINE IN THE LIVING ROOM, the tingle of hearing the first few strings of Nat King Cole's "Christmas Song" and, yes, even brown paper packages tied up with string. These are a few of my untouchable Christmas moments—we all have them—if we didn't get to experience them during the holidays, we'd feel robbed.

It's a funny conundrum being a shelter magazine editor this time of year: usually our jobs are to push the envelope, pull the curtain back on new ideas, change things up and high-light creative innovation in the world of design and décor, and yet during Christmas, I never want to. This is when I truly feel that if everything is just as before, all is right in the world.

So this issue we really celebrated the classics. We toured Christmas homes that perfectly captured the nostalgic Christmas spirit. These are homes that worked hard to pre-serve tradition, that honored their own family's history. You'll see how whether it's snow falling on cedars or raindrops falling on roses, you can create cozy wintry style no matter where you live.

We cover the holiday basics: the must-have décor you should add to your holiday arsenal (pages 10 and 16), how to be a great host to visiting guests (pages 12, 14 and 22) and what you should get everyone on your Christmas list (page 28). And of course, because we're still creatives at heart, we have a few fun ways to spice it up this winter with sparkles and shine and everything in between. Merry Christmas to you and yours.

Jackie Torres, Editor



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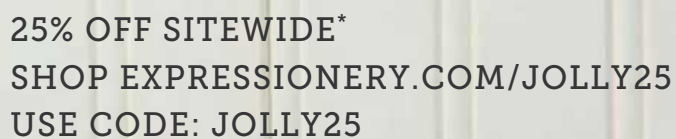
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ALL Drawn Up

BY JICKIE TORRES

These merry Christmas finds infuse the spirit of artistry into your holiday décor with illustrated art and hand-drawn text.

"E" is for enchanting when it comes to this whimsical holiday illustration, part of artist Melissa B. Tubbs' alphabet series. Illustrated "E" 8- x 8-inch pen-and-ink framed art, \$450. (334) 538-7800 or inkartist1.wix.com.



Keep the mood up with this chipper message on an elegant accent. Merriest Christmas decoupage glass tray, \$64. (888) 922-7646 or bensgarden.com.



Squirrels and holly make this a wonderful cuppa to wake up to. British larder mug, \$20. (855) 396-6100 or lauraashleyusa.com.



Decide if you'd like to take a chance this holiday with this cute question, Just How Good Do I Have To Be? wall art, \$19.99. Visit christmastraditions.com.



Welcome winter with these classic winter animals dressed up for the season. Puffin and reindeer pillows, \$39. Visit westelm.com.



These cozy fellas will get you in the holiday mood. Rachel Kozlowski Dapper Animal dinnerware, \$10 each. Visit westelm.com.



Make the mood festive and fun with these classically green and red chalk-painted signs. Chalkboard Christmas messages set of 2, \$9.98. Visit worldmarket.com.



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frost, deep blue & pine green

Take inspiration from nature to design a guest room with refreshing wintry appeal.

BY SARAH JANE O'KEEFE

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[3]



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7. Borough Market No. 38 paint, \$38 for 1 liter. Visit mylands.co.uk.
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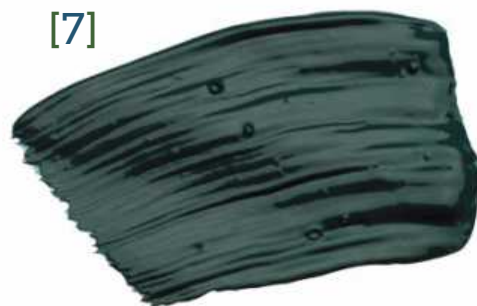


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A Merry WELCOME

Make your front porch a cheery sight for guests and passersby.

BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR

PHOTOGRAPH BY AMY BUCHANAN



YOUR PORCH IS THE FIRST GLIMPSE VISITORS have of your home's style and feel. But how do you create a cheery scene without making things too cluttered? Blogger Amy Buchanan of *Atta Girl Says* has a few tips when it comes to styling a winter wonderland to welcome friends and family.

Start with a Blank Canvas. It's hard to visualize how a space will look when it already has objects or furniture in place. "I have to remove all the visual clutter so I can only see the objects I want to visualize," Amy says. "Move all the boxes out of the way so you can see what's really there."

GROUP BY THEME! AMY DECIDED ON A VINTAGE WINTER SPORT THEME WITH CLASSIC COLORS **AND NEUTRAL MATERIALS.**

Rearrange. "For me, styling is a lot of trial and error," Amy says. "I'll put things out and move them, then sit back and look at it." Try grouping the same set of objects in different arrangements, or bring in items from other parts of your house. "When something's just not working, I usually shop through the house and look at the other things I have," Amy says.

Learn from Others. "Styling is an evolving skill, and you can always learn from other people," Amy says. "I'll often see what the professionals have done in magazines, and then try to copy that." Bookmark pages in magazines and catalogs that catch your eye; then rifle through them before you start styling a space. Keep track of the elements that make those spaces so attractive; then work those ideas into your design.

For more on Amy's projects and ideas, visit attagirlsays.com.

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OUR FAVORITE ORNAMENTS

BY JACKIE TORRES

This year it's all about the shimmer and sparkle. These additions will add some glitter and gold to your Christmas tree collection.

1. This is no ordinary Christmas figure. Enjoy the nutcracker in his most elegant of dress. Lladro porcelain Nutcracker ornament, \$120. (800) 835-0919 or ross-simons.com.

2. Constructed in the same way bottlebrush trees are, this fuzzy little fella touts a sparkling spiffy set of ear muffs. Bottlebrush penguin ornament, \$10. (888) 922-4119 or westelm.com.

3. What could make the holiday more magical than a unicorn? Unicorn Mount ornament, \$24. Visit spitfiregirl.com.

4. Go retro with this starry-eyed orb in jazzed up classical colors. Flocked 5-inch Merry Christmas ball ornament, \$12.99. Visit christmastraditions.com.

5. A blend of classic Christmas components, these stag-head ornaments combine a festive patterned wrap with gold trimming. Metal patterned stag ornaments, set of 3, \$14.97. (877) 967-5362 or worldmarket.com.





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BAKING *Holiday Memories*

BY SARAH JANE O'KEEFE
PHOTOGRAPHY AND
STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES
PRODUCED BY DIANE SEDO

Don't forget to spread a little Christmas cheer to the most-loved room of the house.

RETRO CHRISTMAS DÉCOR IS ABOUT MORE THAN CUTE TREASURES PUT ON DISPLAY. THESE COLLECTIBLES CONJURE UP MEMORIES FROM CHILDHOOD AND HAPPILY PROVIDE A SENSE OF NOSTALGIA NO BIG-BOX STORE CAN PROVIDE. TO BRING THIS CHEERFUL SENSE HOME, ADD A LITTLE SPICE TO YOUR KITCHEN WITH HOLIDAY DÉCOR FROM CELEBRATIONS PAST.

CARE FOR A TOM & JERRY?

Cold winter nights call for a warm beverage—but before you reach for the hot cocoa or tea, consider the Tom & Jerry. Originated in the 1800s and popular through the 1960s, this drink, as well as its bowl and mug sets, is regaining the attention of mixologists and vintage collectors alike.

Typically served with a ladle out of the bowl and into petite mugs, these sets come in a wide variety of patterns—one of the most popular being Hazel Atlas' "Christmas Carol." Depicting top hat-wearing drinkers, this milk-glass set shares one thing in common with all Tom and Jerry sets: it bears the drink's name. While Hazel Atlas preferred old English script to label their four-drink-set patterns, other makers opted for simpler designs such as creamy off-white mugs with gold script.

VINTAGE CHRISTMAS BAKING ITEMS TAKE ON NEW LIFE WHEN USED AS DÉCOR IN A MODERN KITCHEN.



OH, GOODIE!

Whether filled with treats as a small Christmas gift, stuffed with sweets as a party favor or used as a clever alternative to a typical gift bag, vintage cellophane bags are as merry as can be.

Often tucked amid countless online listings or in catchall baskets at antique malls, cellophane bags are just quirky enough to be a good inexpensive buy. Their fun patterns and retro designs are just as cute this holiday season as they were originally—and so is receiving a goodie bag filled with Christmas treats.

DECK THE TABLE

Beginning during the Great Depression, holiday tablecloths were mass produced and marketed as an inexpensive way to add cheer. These “lunch cloths” quickly gained popularity, thanks to their countless patterns and low cost. Through the 1970s popular manufacturers included Simtex, Startex and Wilendure.

Since many of the vintage tablecloths available no longer have tags or their printing has long worn off, many collectors estimate the age of a tablecloth based on its size and art style. Until the 1950s the most common tablecloth size was 52 square inches. Rectangular tablecloths approximately 54 x 64 inches were introduced in the 1940s, and 60 inch round cloths stole the show in the 1960s. Longer lengths, such as 88 inches, are highly valuable and difficult to find. For help determining age based on art style, compare the tablecloth's pattern to dated vintage Christmas cards, or talk to a textile or antiques dealer.

Despite era or worth, vintage Christmas tablecloths carry with them a cheerful sense of nostalgia. While difficult to find without stains from holiday dinners past or worn from countless uses and washes, these linens are a seasonal staple for the vintage collector.

| TOP | THE ICONIC TOM AND JERRY DRINK SET ADDS RETRO APPEAL. Other patterns from Hazel Atlas include “Auld Lang Syne,” “Currier and Ives” and “Colonial.” All printed in red and green on milk glass, these sets can be easily found and average \$50 each. Delicate porcelain sets and iridescent glass varieties, such as those produced by Fire King, are slightly harder to find.

| LEFT | NEED HELP DATING YOUR WILENDURE TABLECLOTH? The “e” at the end of the company's name was added in 1958—making rough production estimates easier.



SMALLER MOLDED CAKE PANS CAN BE FASHIONED INTO TREE TOPPERS WITH THE HELP OF A LITTLE CRAFT WIRE.

SANTA'S MIDNIGHT TREAT

Christmas is the season for cookies. From gingerbread men to sugar-cookie snowflakes, this is the time of year when rolling pins, cookie cutters and tins get the most use.

Turn to retro cookie cutters for iconic shapes with added charm, but if your cookie cutters are rusty, retire them to decorative accents. A strand of ribbon turns them into charming ornaments for the tree—or create a kitchen-themed wreath for over the sink. Let them dangle from cup hooks, create a small cluster to hang on a cabinet knob or display in a vintage mixing bowl.

Vintage cookie tins make for festive and unique gift giving. Fill with fluffy tissue paper and stuff with cookies, candies and miniature cakes, or surprise the recipient with a nonbaked good. With a wide price range online, vintage cookie tins are best picked up in local shops. Find one you just can't give up? These treasures make for great storage for ornaments and other fragile decorative items.

SHAPE & BAKE

There is something special about walking into a Christmas party and seeing a tree-shaped cake proudly displayed on the dessert table. Iconic holiday shapes such as snowmen, Santa, presents and gingerbread men have long been turned into cakes because, quite simply, they're charming.

While copper cake pans are often favored thanks to their glistening color, tin varieties still have plenty of appeal. The Victorian era saw the rise of molded foods, especially meat dishes, while in the 1950s gelatin desserts and cakes cornered the market. These pans became staples for retro holiday celebrations and are now collectable items. If frosting a Santa face feels too labor intensive, simply display a collection of cake pans in the kitchen as wall art, or center your favorite in the middle of a wreath.

CELLOPHANE WAS NOT USED IN PACKAGING

FOOD in the United States until 1912. Waterproof but not moisture proof, the product's popularity didn't rise until 1927 when the moisture problem was solved.

SANTA AND SNOW-FILLED SCENES are by far the most popular cookie tins. Many carry a brand name, such as a soda or cookie company, or even the year.



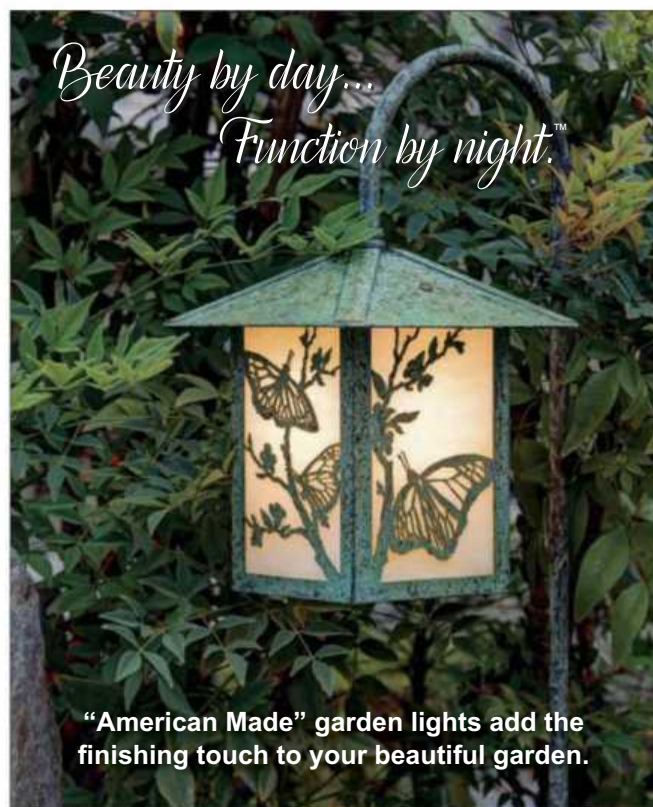
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TABLETOP MAGIC

Impress your guests this year with beautiful, unique place cards at the dinner table.

BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR

THE MANTEL, ENTRYWAY AND STAIRCASE ARE OFTEN THE HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES OF CHRISTMAS and Hanukkah décor. But don't neglect your dining table—it's not only the main focus of the dining room, but it plays a large part on the feast day itself. Make the table personal with place cards that reflect your décor and your guests themselves. Here are some ideas to get you started.

PINECONE PERFECTION

This easy place card is delightful to the eye. Courtney of French Country Cottage collected pinecones with flat bottoms, then painted the tips white with a sturdy sponge brush. You could even dip the pinecones completely in the paint for a pure snowy look. Then write out your place cards and insert one in the top of each pinecone. Assemble the setting on the plate with a sprig of greenery for a little extra color.



PHOTO BY HENRY Z. DE KUYPER

MINI MECHANICALS

Carmel Phillips of OurFifthHouse.com made these "tree" tow-truck place cards from toys and clothespins. Start by filling a small spritz bottle with equal parts distilled vinegar and water and set it aside. Spray several coats of Krylon Looking Glass spray paint onto the cars and clothespins; then add some uneven splotches of black spray paint. Spray on the vinegar-water mixture, and then add another coat of glass spray paint. With a paper towel, blot and dab at the paint to create a mercury effect. Once the cars and clothespins are dry, glue them together, tie a sprig of rosemary on the top and clip in a name card.



PHOTO BY CARMEL PHILLIPS, OURFIFTHHOUSE.COM

◀ ORNAMENT LOVING

Let your place cards serve double duty as both seating direction and party favor. Add each name to a simple glass ornament and bedazzle it with a matching ribbon. If you use clear glass ornaments, you can also add a little extra glisten by inserting some loose glitter inside the sphere.

FESTIVE FAVORS

Make the dinner table even more festive with a hand-wrapped gift to give to your guests. This place card will act as the party favor also, so you don't have to divide your time between too many projects. Wrap a small gift in brown paper and add a length of ribbon or lace. Use a custom stamp, like these stamps from Expressionery, to create custom gift tags. Attach them to your gifts with miniature clothespins for a fun effect.



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Fresh & FESTIVE

BY JICKIE TORRES
PHOTO BY IPC MEDIA

Red and white combine for a fresh look, thanks to sweet handmade style and modern use of pattern.

WITH THE HOLIDAYS USUALLY CREATING A SYMPHONY OF COLOR,

a simplified palette is a refreshing break from the hustle and bustle of the season. Less is actually more in this case as the room comes together with a peppy polka-dot and stripe motif, making for charm and harmony throughout. Here's how to get the look.

Keep It Simple

The décor of this space centers around red and white, inspired by a Scandinavian freshness. A few big items, such as furnishings and pillows, are kept to a neutral creamy flax so the crisp combo is uninterrupted. Spread the color around the room evenly for a balanced look.

Folk Stars

A lot has to happen in order to mix patterns successfully. Here the key factor to the pretty and pleasant combo is motif. A folk-inspired mix of stripes, dots and animals doesn't overwhelm the eye with a cacophony of different shapes and sizes. Keep scale in mind too. Alternate large and small-scale patterns throughout the room to keep things harmonious.

Creative Charm

Add a personal touch with a few items that feel handspun. From the hearth and clothespin garland that makes it easy to hang everything (from stockings to Christmas cards) up front and center, to the pennant banner adorning the tree with a sweet message, there are elements here that feel steeped in creativity.



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Blue Safety - 00027
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American Heritage w/verse "God Bless America" - 00324
Leather Cover and Labels - 00324

God Bless America - 00006
Leather Cover and Labels - 00006

Lena Liu's Floral Borders - 00088 w/optional verse "Lord bless and keep you." - 00117
Leather Cover and Labels - 00088

Country Seasons - 00483
Leather Cover and Labels - 00483

Le Rooster - 00217
Leather Cover and Labels - 00217

Faith, Hope, Christ - 00633
Fabric Cover and Labels - 00633

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Comical Cats w/verse "Blossoming with Purr-sonality!" - 00570
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Lena Liu's Morning Serenade - 00029
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New Day w/verse "Each day brings hope!" - 00447
Leather Cover and Labels - 00447

Best of Thomas Kinkadee - 00590
Eight images. Leather Cover and Labels - 00590

Ohio State University - 00513
Leather Cover and Labels - 00513

On the Wings of Hope - 00384
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Fleur de Lis - 00589
Leather Cover and Labels - 00589

Lighthouse Inspirations - 00635
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Garden Graces w/verse "Live well, laugh often, love much!" - 00172
Leather Cover and Labels - 00172

Ohio State University - 00513
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Sunflowers - 00334
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Footprints w/verse "One night I dreamed that I was walking along the beach with the Lord." - 00667
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Leather Cover and Labels - 00437

Lena Liu's Enchanted Wings - 00026
Leather Cover and Labels - 00026

Marjolein's Garden - 00377
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Thomas Kinkadee's Country Escapes - 00162
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Holiday Filigree

Paper quilling can add new dimensions to your cards this season.

BY MELISSA ANDERSON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERGANA PENCHEVA



[top] Use bright, festive colors to make your card stand out.

[left] Find the patterns that remind you of the wonder of the season, like this green-plaid print intermixed with engraved cardstock.

tip: If your paper doesn't want to roll, try dampening your fingers beforehand.



[opposite] Quilling paper with unconventional methods is a great way to transform traditional Christmas themes into works of art.

The art of paper quilling has been around for centuries, and its versatile nature has allowed it to appear on everything from furnishings to museum walls. For Gergana Pencheva, the owner behind the Etsy shop Gericards, adding this kind of paper filigree to cards is a great way to make every occasion worth celebrating. "I recommend it to all who love art," Gergana says. "I'm satisfied when I see the smiles on the faces of people who are amazed by my work." Any design—from animals and flowers to names and monograms—can make a unique gift that will speak to that special person in your life.

While there are different tools for curling paper and hundreds of different forms you can create, quilling at its core is simple. All you need is colored printer paper and a rounding tool—something as simple as a toothpick can work. "I usually use 3-mm paper strips and roll them with a special tool," Gergana says. But what really holds it together is the glue. "The glue is a very important part of card making," she says. "It has to be colorless, so the card will not smudge." Once you roll your strips, let them loose from your tool and use your fingers to create your desired shape. Add a small dot of glue to the loose end of the spiral with a toothpick or the head of a pin to hold the piece in place.

For more of Gergana's work, visit her at gericards.etsy.com.

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BY MELISSA ANDERSON
PRODUCED BY JICKIE TORRES

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

LOOKING FOR FINDS THAT FEEL EXTRA SPECIAL? WE'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST, NO MATTER YOUR BUDGET! HERE ARE SOME GIFT IDEAS WE THINK ARE WORTHY OF APPLAUSE.

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3. THIS GRAPHIC BOARD turns a kitchen necessity into designer fodder. Etched triangles cutting board, \$65. Visit leifshop.com.

4. A PERFECT POP OF PASTEL, this jar will dress up any space, even as it helps hold all the odds and ends. Speckled storage jar, \$85. Visit leifshop.com.

5. THIS WALNUT CAKE STAND adds a little modern warmth to any home. Hardwood walnut cake stand: thick base, \$70. Visit aheirloom.com.



under \$20

6. PALM BEACH Lately stemless acrylic wine glass, \$10. shop.palmbeachlately.com.

7. HEXAGON PAPER SERVING PLATTER SET, \$12. Visit leifshop.com.

8. WHIMSICAL WHALE CERAMIC BUTTER DISH, \$19. Visit shopplasticland.com.

For the
CREATIVE

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22

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19. TRAVEL IN EFFICIENCY AND STYLE as this totally modern kit organizes everything from your chargers to your accessories. Tech dopp kit, \$150. Visit store.leibal.com.

20. ALL JUNIPER AND STEEL, this handmade must-have features a blade and corkscrew combo sure to please. Laguiole wine key, \$187. (505) 600-1015 or spartan-shop.com.

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22. VETIVER + SAGE BEARD TONIC, \$20. Visit mooreaseal.com.

23. SMART KEY ORGANIZER, \$19.95. (888) 557-8761 or gentsupplyco.com.

24. GOOD O WHISKEY DRINK GLASSES—set of 2, \$7. (213) 896-9282 or spitfiregirl.com.

For the
HOSTESS

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25



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27



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28



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32

25. MADE JUST THE RIGHT SIZE to fit a standard bottle of wine, this decanter is perfect whether you're serving or letting it breathe. French decanter, \$28. shop.gessato.com.

26. WITH HER INITIAL IN A STUNNINGLY SIMPLE WREATH, this stamp is perfect for personalizing gifts, invitations, place settings and more. Monogram wreath custom stamp, \$45. (866) 521-6211 or expressionery.com.

27. THESE ELEGANTLY REFINED TWIRLS keep wine cold without dilution, all while resting at the bottom of the glass, so they never interfere with the next sip. Wine swirls, set of 4, \$20. (877) 899-1190 or teroforma.com.

28. SIMPLE AND COLORFUL, these clam shell containers promise to make a splash in any vignette. Clam Shell, \$45. (866) 478-7297 or straydogdesigns.com.

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30. BRASS PINEAPPLE COIN DISH, \$16. Visit hattanhome.com.

31. I'M IN LOVE MATCHES, \$10. Visit designindarling.com.

32. KATE SPADE New York gold dots insulated tumbler, \$18. (844) 648-7658 or swoozies.com.

For
THE KIDS



33. INSPIRED BY THE CUB SCOUTS, this inspirational felt pennant offers a sporty style and a great message. Do Your Best pennant, \$36. (646) 279-0700 or threepotatofour.com.

34. WITH SPECIAL NONSLIP SOLES, these colorful classics promise to add some cheer to any dreary day. Kids aqua-yellow/turquoise, \$40. (866) 822-0962 or us.havaianas.com.

35. A WOOD CONSTRUCTED CHILDHOOD must-have, musical sheets are even included to ensure your child is the star of the show. The little red accordion, \$37.50. (213) 896-9282 or spitfiregirl.com.

36. BRILLIANTLY COLORFUL, this building block-puzzle combo is at once a brain teaser and creative outlet that's perfect for developing children. Rainbow block puzzle, \$62. (207) 747-4730 or alittlemorelikethis.com.

37. MADE ENTIRELY BY HAND, this classic creation is a perfect addition to any room for an animal-loving tyke. Fox head papier mâché sculpture by Abigail Brown, \$125.04. Visit everythingbegins.com.

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38. THE ORIGINAL PUSH-POP CONFETTI, \$8.50. Visit thimblepress.com.

39. SANTA COOKIES, starting at \$7. (855) 784-2734 or sugarfina.com.



40



41

under
\$20!



45

For the
**VINTAGE
LOVER**



44



43



42



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47

40. BRING A LITTLE OCEAN CHARM into your home with this retro boardwalk print. Rehoboth beach chair, \$34.95/\$135 if framed. (302) 537-6617 or beachtownposters.com.

41. WITH AN EXTERIOR as bright as the beach-day smells it will remind you of, this candle is great for warming a home this winter. Seawicks beach girl candle, \$22. (251) 981-2311 or obacanvasco.com.

42. WITH A LOOK straight out of an old French film, get this chalkboard to announce your menu. Chalkboard menu board with metal stand, \$28.95. (866) 567-7958 or farmhousewares.com.

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STUFFERS



48



49



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54



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52

48. REFLECT ON A POSITIVE MESSAGE to get through to the girl on the go, Get Happy pocket mirror, \$8. Visit thesocialtype.com.

49. TAKE A CLASSIC IMAGE and make it yours; this embroidery pattern is great for that crafty creative. Golden Gate embroidery kit, \$20. Visit shoptwine.com.

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52. WITH ROOM FOR 3 CABLES and 2 plugs, this leather creation rolls all this technology into one easy-to-store holder. Cordito, \$45. store.leibal.com.

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CHRISTMAS TIME *Is Here*

How do you infuse your home with holiday spirit when your surroundings are sunny all year long? See how vibrant color and lush greenery come together to create a classic Christmas look.

BY AUTUMN KRAUSE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM • STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES

CLASSIC LOOKS. When Howard and Kerry Perlow first started dating, Howard gave Kerry a Christopher Radko Christmas tree decoration. Kerry has since expanded the collection and loves its retro vibe.



REARRANGEMENT. It's always a good idea to reconfigure the Christmas tree room to best highlight the tree. Kerry centers her living room furniture around the Christmas tree. "I like to have friends over, and we sit in the living room with the tree in the circle with us," she says.

To OUTSIDERS, THE PERPETUAL SUNSHINE AND BEACHY BREEZES

found year round in Southern California make winter barely distinguishable from the other seasons. However, locals will talk of subtle changes: a slight chill to the air and the sun disappears faster, while in its place branches turn stark on the local deciduous trees. These details spark the Christmas spirit, and people respond in kind, bringing out strings of lights, planning trips to Christmas tree lots and hanging piney wreaths on their doors to facilitate holiday cheer in the temperate climate.

SEASONAL ELEGANCE. The mantel is second only to the Christmas tree.

Kerry loves emphasizing it with a fresh garland, lights, candles and ornaments. The mantel's soft colors contrast beautifully with the deep greens of the garland.

For the Perlow family, whose stunning Westwood remodel combines classic elegance with colorful touches, Christmas is a time to add a little magic to their residence, even if the temperature on Christmas morning is 70 degrees.

CHRISTMAS CURB APPEAL

Howard and Kerry Perlow worked with architects and designers to expand the existing 2,000 square foot house to 4,500 square feet, complete with a new walkway and porch. "The exteriors look nothing like the original house," says Alison Kandler, their Santa Monica-based interior designer. Alison chose blue stone to pave the entryway, and the railings were painted a crisp white, creating a calm welcome to the Perlow home.

It's there on the porch that guests visiting in December will first sense the Perlows' Yuletide spirit. Kerry festoons the rails with fresh garlands and delicate Christmas lights. She places a classic wreath on the door, complete with quintessential pinecones and a bright red ribbon. Poinsettias on the steps add dimension, and a cheery Christmas mat is one of her holiday must-haves. "I want the mailman, our UPS man and all visitors to smile and feel welcome as they enter our porch," Kerry says. "The porch is the first thing to say 'Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.'"

SEASONAL SOPHISTICATION. Ivory roses, when paired with pinecones, sparkly ribbon and piney foliage, create an unexpected holiday arrangement.

MIX & MATCH. Putting the finishing touches on your room's décor is about hunting for just the right details. Kerry searches for unique decorations—like this weathered tin vessel—at places like Marshalls, Target, One King's Lane and Etsy.

HOLIDAYS AGLOW. Bulbs on the mantel reflect the Christmas lights, adding a romantic glow.

FESTIVE FOOD. Kerry loves baking and uses her artistically decorated treats as alternative centerpieces, often pairing them with holiday platters.





HOW TO BUILD A CHRISTMAS *Centerpiece*

PICK YOUR FLOWERS

Cathy Amador, the BloomNation florist who worked with Kerry to create the Christmas arrangements in her home, loves using roses, lilies and orchids in her holiday designs. She says, "I use roses for their feminine texture, lilies for their fragrance and orchids for their elegant appearance." These florals are unexpected for Christmas and will delight your guests.

ADD HOLIDAY ELEMENTS

Cathy mixes in seasonal foliage like pinecones and hollies with the flowers for a unique take on Christmas floral arrangements. "Pinecones are symbolic of Yuletide," she says. "I suggest getting the scented ones or, if you're gathering them from your backyard, you can use a cinnamon spray from a craft store." These elements tie in with the season and have a long life.

INCORPORATE DECORATIONS

Finally, to give your centerpiece cost-effective dimension, Cathy suggests using Christmas decorations like bows or holiday figurines. "One year I had worn-out holiday plates that I used as my base. I cut out some oasis foam, added a few greens and pinecones from my backyard and some roses and lilies in between," Cathy says. "That's it and it didn't cost me much at all."

For more information on **BloomNation**, an online shop comprised of artisan florists' original and one-of-a-kind designs with same-day hand delivery, visit bloomnation.com.

QUICK CHRISTMAS TOUCHES.

Alison placed Pottery Barn stools at the kitchen island that are easy to dress up during Christmas. Kerry slipped snowflake decorations over the backs of the chairs for instant Yuletide cheer.







EAT IT UP. Cupcakes decorated for the holidays double as easy, edible arrangements.



COZY CORNER. The breakfast nook features Janus et Cie chairs which are made of beautiful loom material. The red cushions were selected to match the kitchen range and translate perfectly during the holidays, since Kerry opts for a classic Christmas color scheme.

HOLIDAYS IN THE LIVING ROOM

The living room is the showcase for the Christmas tree. Alison added whimsical touches to the traditional space, picking out unique tiles from Country Floors to surround the fireplace. Since the living room was designed for grown-up entertaining, Alison envisioned a sophisticated aesthetic with white walls and a white couch topped with pillows from Peter Fasano.

For Kerry, the room is the perfect showcase for the Perlow Christmas tree. "I love to have the Christmas tree in the center of the living room, in front of our double doors—so it can be seen from both inside and outside," Kerry says. "The white lights and all the bulbs and ornaments reflect so beautifully on the glass from the doors and side windows." Nests and birds feature prominently in the decorations. They are a sweet reminder of the first Christmas tree Kerry and Howard purchased together 17 years ago. While arranging its branches, Kerry found a nest in the tree. "I felt it was a good sign—a sign of a home, love and joy!" Kerry recalls. After that, she started collecting bird ornaments from different cities the family has visited and stores she loves. And, of course, the original nest is always incorporated into Kerry's décor. "For the first few years, I put it on the tree," Kerry says "but, I now just keep it in my living room so that it won't fall apart."

KITCHEN CHRISTMAS TIDINGS

When it came to the kitchen, Alison proposed a warm and inviting place with unexpected touches. The results were stunning cabinets painted in a beautiful lacquered green and a bright red stove, which is Howard's favorite color. The Lacanche French Ranges stove was imported from France and paired with a custom hood. White Adex tiles compose the backsplash, and Caesarstone countertops add a classic feel and enhance the eye-catching stove.

During the holidays, Kerry naturally enhances the beauty of the kitchen with Christmas treats. "I love to bake. My



[OPPOSITE] CHEERY RED. The stunning red stove fits in perfectly with the Perlows' Christmas décor. Kerry loves preparing treats in the kitchen with her two sons, helping them make cherished holiday memories, from the baking to the eating!







[CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] HOLIDAY HOSTING. When guests arrive for Christmas, don't overlook the small spaces that can add some cheer. It is important to Kerry to make sure the guest bathroom reflects the holidays, so she frames the sink with Christmas decorations. • **SEASONAL SWAP.** During the year, Kerry typically has seashells in these glass vessels. However, in December, she easily transitions them to holiday glam with glass bulbs, colorful ornaments and gold jingle bells. • **WINTER WONDERS.** Creativity and whimsy make for visually appealing tableaux. While Kerry placed decorations on the sink countertop, she also added a reindeer decoration to the drawer pulls for a lighthearted touch. • **SERENE SPACES.** During the bustle of the holidays it's important to have a place to retreat to. Alison had the Cheviot bathtub custom painted to mesh beautifully with the soft colored tiles. Kerry added a simple Christmas touch with a red-and-white hand towel folded over its side.

kitchen's biggest holiday decoration is the food!" Kerry says. "I decorate with cookies, breads and cakes. Nothing smells better than Christmas baked goodies!"


In addition, Kerry's utilitarian kitchen utensils—dishcloths, platters, bowls—double as holiday décor, as she brings out her collection of holiday-inspired serveware. She extends her baking gifts past her kitchen, often gifting friends with cookies on a Yuletide plate, complete with her recipe.

With meaningful, timeless Christmas decorations used to enhance their beautifully renovated home, the Perlows prove that the holiday spirit can be anywhere—even in sunny Southern California. 

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 144

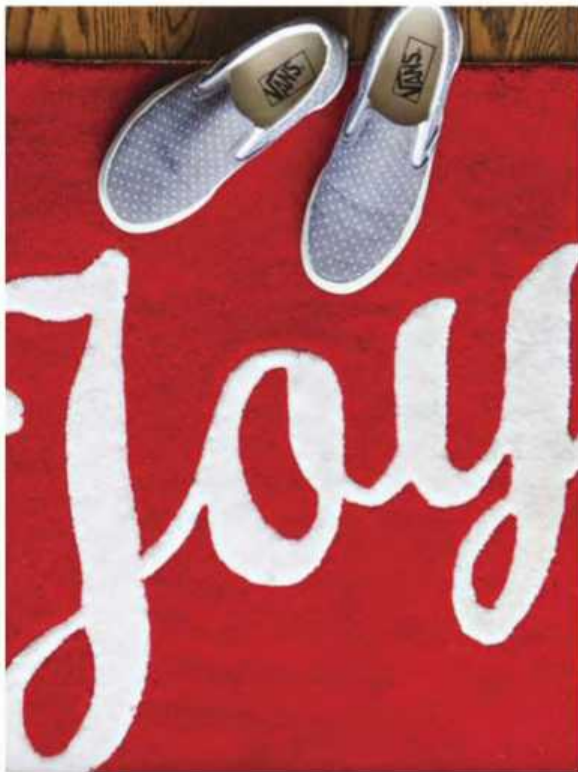


PERSONALIZED STYLE. Alison loves bedrooms that aren't overly coordinated, so she selected furnishings that contrasted beautifully with each other, giving the room an eclectic feel. Kerry added a seasonal touch by mixing Christmas throw pillows in with their everyday pillows.

A photograph of a front door decorated for Christmas. The door is dark wood with a large glass panel. A green wreath with pinecones and a large red bow is hanging on the door. To the left of the door is a red poinsettia plant. The door is flanked by white-framed windows. The text is overlaid on the glass panel of the door.

"I WANT THE MAILMAN,
OUR UPS MAN AND ALL
VISITORS TO SMILE AND FEEL
WELCOME AS THEY ENTER
OUR PORCH," KERRY SAYS.

"THE PORCH IS THE
FIRST THING TO SAY
'MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
HAPPY HOLIDAYS.'"



|OPPOSITE| TIDINGS OF JOY.

Kerry has a penchant for timeless Christmas hallmarks, like sizeable door wreaths. She plays with asymmetry by placing a poinsettia to one side of the door.

|CLOCKWISE| HELLO, HOLIDAYS!

A Christmas doormat gives the front door a sense of spirited fun and adds a playful element to the Perlows' porch decorations. • **LUSH LIFE.** Green lawns in December are common in Southern California, and they provide a fresh, unexpected background to details like richly red poinsettias. • **FESTIVE FRONT YARD.** The Perlows' fresh, traditional garland contrasts with the white railings and can easily be seen by people driving by. • **WELCOME HOME.** The wreath is perfectly proportioned for the door and gives the porch a cheery feel.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS. "I love cooking and eating outdoors," says Mara. "The firepit gets a lot of use in all weather—you have to learn to love the snow or you'd spend a lot of time indoors!" She's also planning another al fresco addition: a tree-house dining area overlooking the lake.

A photograph of a blue cabin with a dark metal roof and stone pillars, surrounded by snow and trees. The cabin has a rustic feel with a large stone fireplace on the right side. The roof is covered in snow, and the surrounding landscape is a snowy field with bare trees in the background.

HOME WITHIN A HOME

Classic countryside charm gets wrapped in contemporary convenience—literally—with this historic cabin that's been preserved inside a modern home.

BY REBECCA WINWARD / GAP INTERIORS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN STUBBERT / GAP INTERIORS



SCANDI CHRISTMAS. In keeping with the almost Scandinavian-inspired decorative scheme, gifts are simply wrapped in red and white paper, accessorized with ribbon and twine; parcel labels make great gift tags.

Dave Spolnik, of Sprout Studios, was tasked with finding a solution, and after various concepts were bandied around—such as using the cabin as a wing of the new house—a whimsical yet inspired design won Mara and John's hearts. The original cabin now sits in the center of the new house, fabric and character both very much intact.

OLD MEETS NEW

The resulting building is spectacular, at the same time evoking a traditional countryside vernacular and updating it with an industrial, contemporary edge that's perfect for the modern lifestyle. Even the process of the design and build was akin to a 21st-century version of a barn raising.

"The interiors are the result of a collaboration between Dave, me, and the various trades who worked on the build," Mara recalls. "I didn't want a cookie-cutter house or a designer telling me how I should decorate. We had such amazingly skilled local craftspeople involved that it made sense to ask them for their ideas and opinions, and we found once they were asked for input they were a goldmine of ideas. It was such a pleasure to work with these specialists to create something truly unique."

ECLECTIC CHRISTMAS

Thanks to this team effort, the interiors evolved as the project took shape. Mara describes the resulting style as rustic-eclectic with touches of the industrial. "There were elements I knew I wanted from the outset—for example, the hand-plastered walls, and the burnt-cork floor in the kitchen area—but the rest just

When

IT CAME TO EXPANDING THEIR CHERISHED SELF-BUILT CABIN IN THE WOODS,

Mara Smelters Wier and her late husband, John, had a very specific requirement. "We built the original cabin in 1980 out of timber felled on the site, initially to use as a summer retreat, but it later became our full-time home. After 30 years of living in it, it was important to us that we retained the character of the building in some way," Mara explains. Friend and local architect



WHOLE-HOUSE LIVING. Traditional Christmas decorations have the ideal backdrop in the cabin's vernacular architecture. The materials used for the new-build part of the house are in keeping with it too. For example, the ceiling boards between the rafters are reclaimed barn boards (usually silver gray, they've been whitewashed for a contemporary look), while the structural steel rods suggest a more industrial architectural style yet exude no less charm.



PORCH DINNER. As cooking for friends and family is so important to her, Mara had a pair of dining tables custom-made locally to seat 14—there are two eight-seater cherry-wood tables under the tablecloth here, placed end-to-end.



WARM & COZY. The cabin living room has a comfy, intimate feel and is outfitted with casual furnishings and simple yet classic wintry color and pattern, such as the buffalo-check pillows and the bright Pendleton stripe throw. Mara made the coffee table some years ago, using timber from the property.



CHEERY RED. A simple red and white color scheme, combined with natural materials—both found in the locale and borrowed from the kitchen—creates a relaxed, festive table setting.

RUSTIC TREATS. Mulled cider served in Mason jar mugs, stirred with a cinnamon stick, is an appropriately rustic festive tippie, while red and white folk-style tableware is stylish all year round, not just at Christmas!

LOCAL COOKING. One of Mara's favorite features of the house is the island unit in the kitchen with its 3-inch walnut worktop. (It took eight men to lower it into position!) "I live in the kitchen; it's my nerve center," she explains. The cabinets were locally made and feature a painted finish.



EFFICIENCY APPROACH.

Mara is often to be found at her Wolf range cooker, as she's a professionally trained cook. A collector of cookbooks, with several hundred on her shelves, she tries new recipes every day.





IT'S NO WONDER THAT THE HOUSE IS SO PERFECT FOR CELEBRATIONS AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR, **BUT THANKS TO ITS RUSTIC CHARM, IT REALLY COMES INTO ITS OWN AT CHRISTMASTIME.**

MATERIAL WORLD. The run of worktop along the wall is PaperStone® (a sustainable material made from recycled paper fiber held together with a water-based binder that's derived from cashew nut shells) and features a routed drainer. The backsplash is glass mosaic.

seemed to follow on from the architecture," Mara explains. "The large space invited industrial-inspired features, while our preference for local materials fed into the style too." Some furnishings were made to suit the space—by local craftspeople using local materials, of course—while others were pieces that had been in the family for decades, both in Mara's own home and that of her mother.

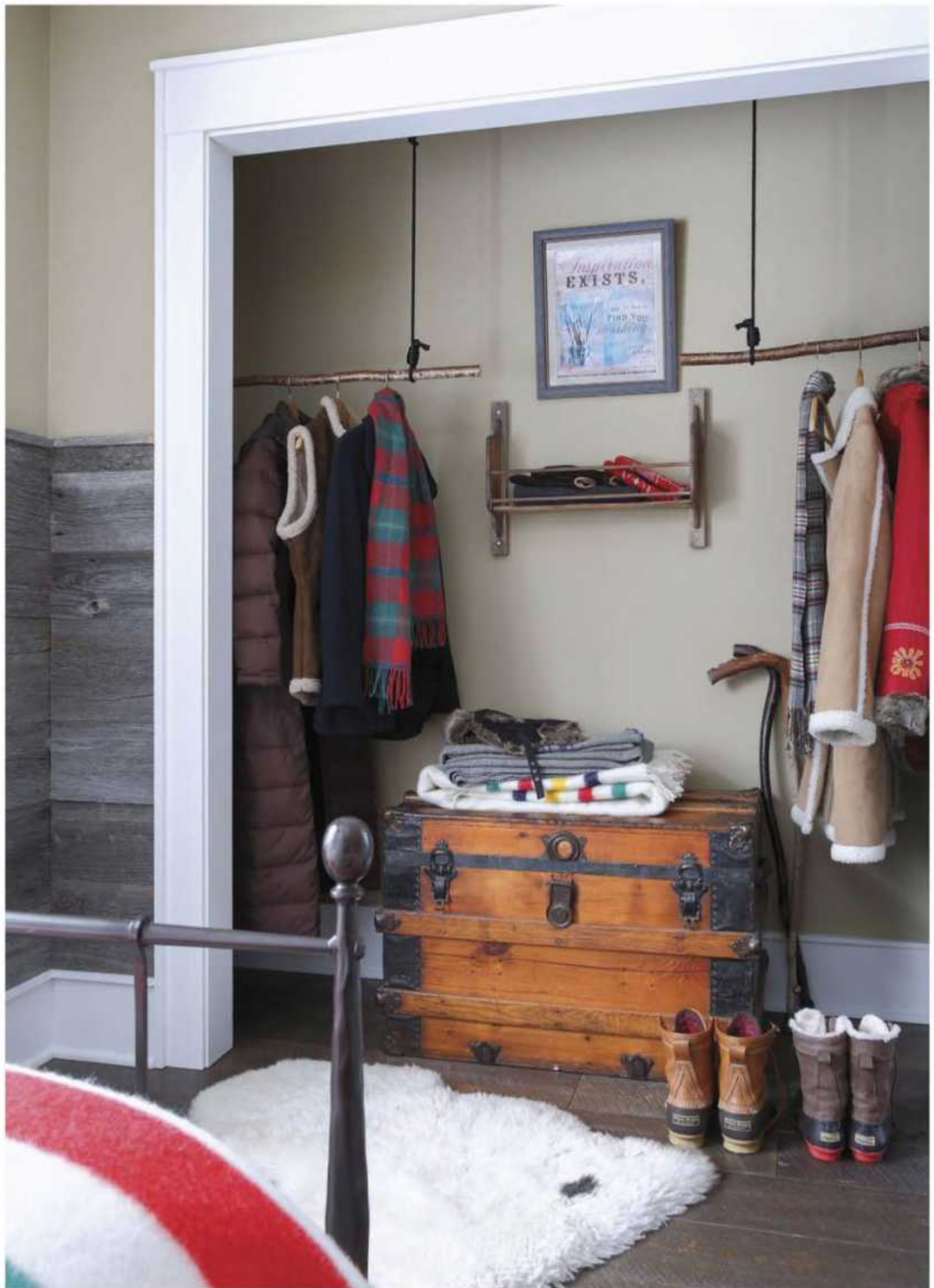
FAVORITE SPACES

Mara certainly didn't need to garner opinions when it came to the space and how she would use it. "I spend a lot of my time in the kitchen, plus I love to entertain, so I knew the layout would need to enable this," she smiles. And so the kitchen and dining areas are open-plan and spacious, while the more private spaces—such as the living room, located in the original cabin—are more intimate in both dimensions and décor. It's no wonder that the house is so perfect for celebrations at any time of the year, but thanks to its rustic charm, it really comes into its own at Christmas time.



HOLIDAY HANGOUT. In the twin bedroom Gris the cat snuggles down on a very Canadian-style icon—a Hudson Bay point blanket. Behind the mini Christmas tree the wall cladding is reclaimed barn board, while the flooring is locally milled pine that shows visible saw marks. After milling, the pine was shipped to Toronto to be laminated onto an engineered floor-board so it would be suitable over under-floor heating.





VINTAGE STORAGE. The storage provision in the twin room is quirky and original. An old chest that John owned for decades allows belongings to be hidden from view, while the hanging closet rails were made by Mara from branches and rope.




RED, WHITE AND TRUE

There's no better complement to traditional architecture than simple Christmas decorations in red and white, augmented by natural materials gathered from the woods outside—pine cones, fir branches and seasonal berries. And of course, a Christmas tree is a must. "I always have a tree, every year," explains Mara. But perhaps even more important to her are the Christmas traditions that involve sharing food with friends and family.

"Every year I hold a cookie-making party, where my friends and I swap recipes, make cookies, and then share the fruits of our labors. By the end of the party, all the guests have a variety of cookies to keep in their freezer, ready to be brought out when Christmas visitors arrive. Also, I always like

to hold a huge gathering just before Christmas," she continues. "At 3 a.m. I start the whole pig roasting on the fire pit outside, and by the time my 60 or so guests arrive 12 hours later—bringing their potluck side dishes with them—it's succulent and melt-in-the-mouth tender. Some people also bring instruments with them, so the music adds to the festive atmosphere too."

But perhaps the best thing about Mara's home is that living in it is like Christmas every day; she feels a sense of joy every morning when she wakes up. "I feel so lucky to have such a beautiful, livable home," she smiles. "The build was a life-defining thing for me, and I will be reaping the rewards of my wonderful design and construction team's efforts for many years to come." 

THERE'S NO BETTER COM-
PLEMENT TO TRADITIONAL
ARCHITECTURE THAN
**SIMPLE CHRISTMAS
DECORATIONS IN
RED AND WHITE,**
AUGMENTED BY NATURAL
MATERIALS GATHERED
FROM THE WOODS
OUTSIDE—PINE CONES,
FIR BRANCHES AND
SEASONAL BERRIES.





◀ **NATURE STORE.** In the kitchen a dry-laid stone wall wraps around the wood burner, a focal point to balance the original cabin, while the local flagstone granite on the floor demarcates the entry hall area. The flooring in the kitchen is burnt cork.

CABIN IN THE WOODS. The architecture of the house references the vernacular style of the area. For example, the steep pitch of the roof is traditional to avoid a heavy load of snow building up. But the architecture is also updated in a contemporary way. Mara is currently landscaping the grounds and expects to be working on them for the next five years, as work is only possible between May and November because of the cold winters.



WARM SOAK. The bathroom is charmingly old-fashioned with a classic slipper bath and cottage-style vanity, plus a vintage stool, with warmth and texture provided by some tumbled limestone tiles.





NICE RIDE. The couple found the old miniature sled in an antiques store. Its small scale indicates it was likely a stage prop; here it fits perfectly in the den and holds the season's growing collection of presents just waiting to be opened on Christmas day.



THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

Get into the holiday mood with creative, clever accents that give your home a sweet handcrafted charm.

BY JONNA KIVILAHTI
PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY KRISTA KELTANEN

WOODSY WARMTH. The bright white dining room is accented by fresh greenery. A simple pine wreath in the winter adds some color to the snowy view of the landscape outside. For an instantly festive makeover, red ceramics stand in lieu of the everyday set in the wall-mounted dish cabinet.



If YOUR IDEA OF A WINTER WONDERLAND INCLUDES RED

as bright as Rudolph's nose and gingerbread men too sweet to eat, then you believe that the Christmas spirit never ages. Johanna and Teemu Saarenpää and their young brood have crafted their home to reflect this whimsy and holiday spirit that is a traditional part of their native Sweden.

Nestled in the snow-covered fields is their lovely yellow house, outlined in icicle-shaped Christmas lights that sparkle against the mostly white backdrop of the northeast countryside. A dozen or more candle lanterns burning along the snow-shoveled path light the way to the front door, demonstrating to guests just a hint of the charm that awaits inside. "To me the holidays are a


time when things literally feel warm and bright with cheer," Johanna says. "I wanted my home to be aglow with Christmas spirit."

HAPPY GO LUCKY

When the couple relocated to a farm plot in Red Hook, New York, in 2002 they built the home from the floor up; it was a family affair that included Johanna's builder father. With such strong family ties woven into every fiber of the home, it makes sense that their traditional Christmas comes together organically every year. Instead of being predetermined, the décor is more a result of patient and loving collecting that happens all year long.

EARTHY CHIC. The long table is decorated with two centerpieces. A pair of dwarf cypresses in box planters is complemented by other natural winter-weather finds, such as citrus slices, cinnamon sticks and hyacinth.





"I keep my eye out starting in autumn, but Christmas is so big in our family that I'm always looking at décor and accents throughout the year and asking myself if they could work again during the holidays." This year their fixation is on Advent calendars, so the whole house is filled with creative versions of them. The children get their own elf calendars, sewn by their grandmother and mother. The pockets contain sweets and small surprises. The parents' calendar is filled with small treats or ideas for activities.

FUN AND GAMES

The creative surprises don't end there. In the living room, the couple keeps their growing collection of Christmas presents in a small sleigh, eschewing the tradition of placing them under a tree. "It was just kind of a funny idea that occurred to us when we stumbled upon this miniature sleigh in an antiques store. Then we realized it would actually fit, so we figured, why not?" she laughs.

Johanna bakes plenty of gingerbread men, and along with them the house is festooned with gnomes—another Swedish tradition. The little felt creations—Johanna and

SCENTS OF THE SEASON.

Cinnamon, star anise and small surprises tucked into each place setting add a hint of holiday spice to the air.



CHEERFUL CHERRY RED. For the holidays Johanna pulls out all the red accents she collects throughout the year. Simple finds like patterned ceramics and floral boxes take on a holiday look when grouped together and combined with greenery.



WARMED UP STYLE. The large indows are covered with frost, but it's cozy inside. Johanna covers the benches and chairs with pelts and pillows, and then curls up in a blanket to enjoy some mulled wine.



FROM THE SIMPLE
WHITE-SLIPCOVERED
SOFA TO THE NATURAL
WOOD RATTAN DINING
CHAIRS, JOHANNA'S
INTERIOR STYLE IS TRUE TO
HER SCANDINAVIAN ROOTS.
HER CLASSICALLY SERENE
AND MINIMAL LOOK ALSO
HELPS HER CHRISTMAS
COLOR PALETTE POP.

NATURAL FINISH. Burlap pillows, woven lanterns and baskets warm up the all-white living room and add a cozy contrast.



ALL TUCKED IN. A small nook under the stairs is no place to waste space. Johanna paired a small club chair with a narrow nightstand-turned-hall-table for a cozy and cushy reading spot.

SIMPLY SEASONAL. A few easy updates add a holiday vibe to the kitchen, including a Christmas bunting, Christmas cards on the fridge in lieu of everyday magnets and red canisters that have been traded for plain glass ones this time of year.




her mother sew many of them themselves—are tucked into tabletop vignettes and placed in bookshelves and, of course, tucked into the tree. Upstairs, an oversized gnome doll sits in the hallway, ready for some life-sized fun.

CHRISTMAS COLOR

From the simple white-slipcovered sofa to the natural wood rattan dining chairs, Johanna's interior style is true to her Scandinavian roots. Her classically serene and minimal look also helps her Christmas color palette pop. "I love red and white together—they feel crisp and clean in the spring but so cheerful and warm in the

winter," she says. "I love that I can collect accents all year and, with just a bit of change in styling, it looks so different."

From polka dots to gingham check, red and white patterns help her home come alive during the holidays. Johanna makes a few simple swaps to infuse each room with a holiday vibe. In the dining room, a few sets of red-patterned ceramics fill the dish rack for instant flair. In the living room, the red throw quilts and accent pillows that replace her year-round flax-colored accents comprise the holiday makeover. "I think you can't go wrong when you approach everything with a fun attitude," Johanna says. 

"I KEEP MY EYE OUT
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I'M ALWAYS LOOKING
AT DÉCOR AND
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ASKING MYSELF IF THEY
COULD WORK AGAIN
DURING THE HOLIDAYS."





TWINKLE TWINKLE. Johanna added Christmas lights to their makeshift canopy bed for a dreamy take on holiday accents. A small faux fur pelt amps up the wintry feel.



SWEDE DREAMS

JOHANNA'S DÉCOR PULLS FROM NOT ONLY HER LOVE OF FRESH, FUN COLOR, BUT ALSO HER SCANDINAVIAN ROOTS. HERE ARE SOME GREAT WAYS TO GIVE YOUR HOME A DOSE OF SWEDISH CHRISTMAS STYLE.

STARS

They twinkle and shout out in your rooms thanks to their festive shape. Play with stars in all sizes, from the fairy lights on the tree to hanging ornaments that adorn everything from doorknobs to chair backs—even your wall pattern.

ANIMALS

In Sweden, it's tradition to feed the animals on Christmas day. So animals play a big role in the recurring motifs of the season. Straw goats, or Jul Bok, and Dala horses add quaint country charm and unmistakably Swedish style.

CANDLES

Tracing back to the tradition of Saint Lucia, who wore candles in her green crown, decorating the home with an abundance of candles is a way to draw good spirit into your abode. Painted wooden candelabras and sprocket votives evoke the perfect Scandi look.

GNOMES

Tomte, as they are called in Sweden, are the ones often credited with sneaking gifts into the house for Christmas. Use a small felt gnome as a present topper as a nod to that tradition.

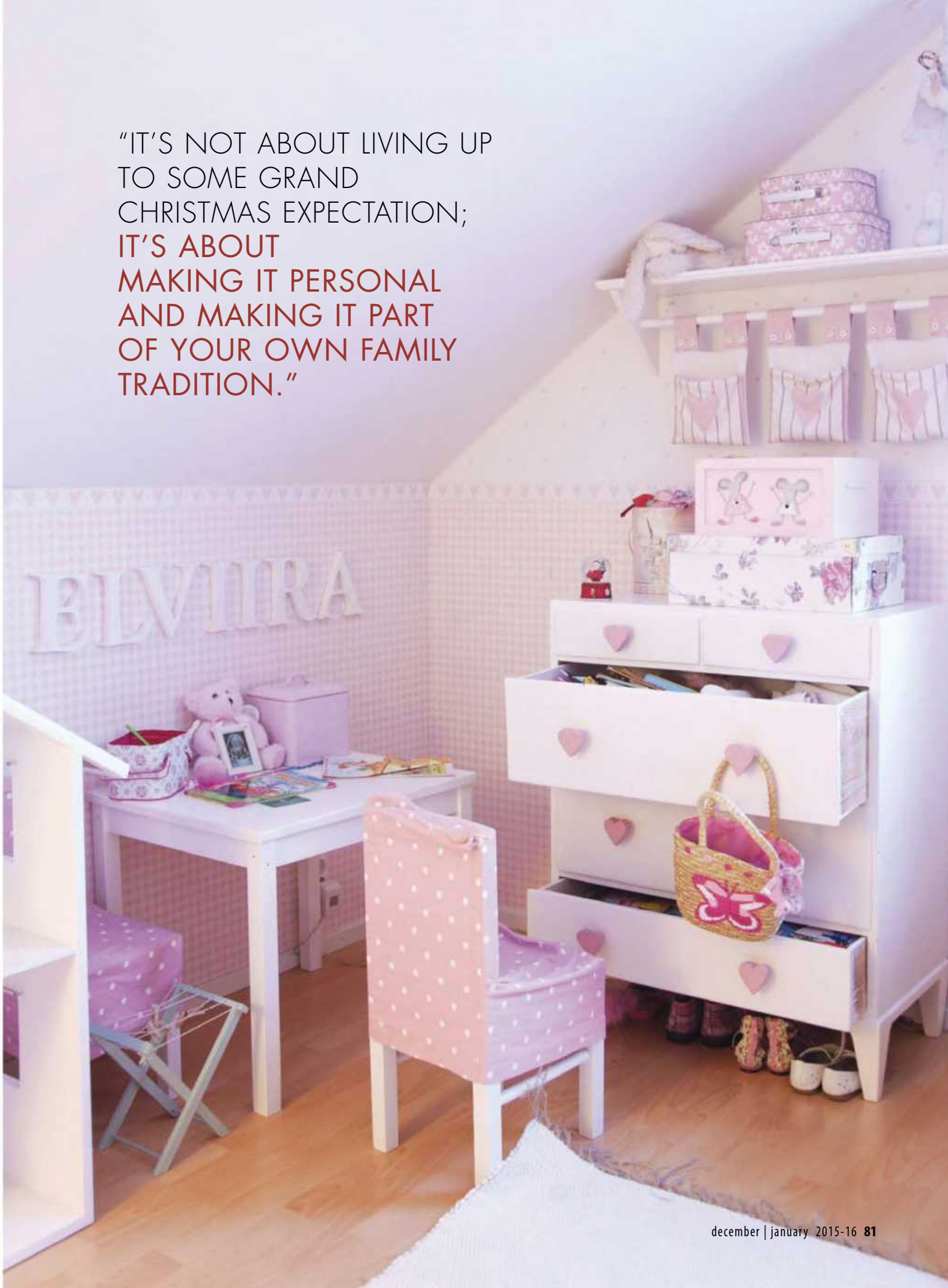
YOU'RE A STAR. Small hand-sewn star ornaments adorn the chair backs in the dining room for a sweet, fun touch.


LIGHT THE WAY. Candlelight throughout the home creates a wonderfully cozy atmosphere. In the morning Johanna lights the first lantern and comes downstairs to enjoy a serene moment before the rest of the family awakes.

FRESH & FESTIVE. Johanna repurposed a set of school boxes as a jolly tower of Christmas treats. Traditional Swedish tomte gnomes sit atop it for a touch of Scandinavian style.



"IT'S NOT ABOUT LIVING UP
TO SOME GRAND
CHRISTMAS EXPECTATION;
IT'S ABOUT
MAKING IT PERSONAL
AND MAKING IT PART
OF YOUR OWN FAMILY
TRADITION."





BOYS WILL BE BOYS. The white in Elmer and Oskar's room is given contrast with black. The stars on the wallpaper match the wintry theme. Of course, the boys get their very own Christmas tree.



KEEP ON TRUCKIN'. The boys get a gingerbread pick-up truck instead of a house for their room.



holiday GLAMOUR

Deck your halls with glitter
and sparkle for the holidays
and beyond.

BY MARGIE MONIN DOMBROWSKI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN GRUEN
STYLING BY JACQUELINE DEMONTRAVEL

SILVERY WINTER. A holiday palette of blue, white and silver, along with faux-fur accessories, is more appropriate—and exciting—for a room painted in a soft gray rather than traditional Christmas colors.

A LITTLE SPARKLE

goes a long way when decorating for the holidays, or any other time of year. This is one design philosophy that interior designer Jill Kalman, owner and designer of Bella Interiors, lives by.



Her traditional colonial-style home in Westport, Connecticut, has an air of sophisticated simplicity, balancing out a soothing and neutral palette of warm grays and whites with unexpected shimmering textures and bursts of bright colors like fuchsia and orange added in for an exciting twist.

Combining vintage pieces with modern ones for a transitional flair, the overall aesthetic of Jill's home is elegant yet comfortable. Here she shares the secrets behind infusing her home with festive details that will welcome guests all year round.

START FRESH

With a neutral background, it's easy to switch out your décor whenever the seasons change or the mood strikes you. Like an artist, Jill created a blank canvas with classic neutral wall colors, and filled in the rest of the space with unique accent colors and eye-capturing textures to add interest and personality.

"I kept the backdrop very soft and neutral, so it has an easy, airy flow, creating a feeling of spaciousness, and layered in various textures and colors with my furnishings," Jill says. "In the dining room there are pops of orange, in the living room I have pink, and in the family room, which is in a soft gray, my favorite color Cornforth White by Farrow & Ball, we popped lavenders, deep purples and pink against the gray."

White oak floors throughout, along with furnishings such as a cerused oak

FESTIVE POP. The family room features pops of fuchsia and blue in the striking painting on the rear wall, table lamps and accent pillows. Rather than introduce clashing Christmassy colors, Jill continues the color scheme and ties it all together with silvery, shimmering and faux-feathery holiday décor.



... A SOOTHING AND NEUTRAL PALETTE OF WARM GRAYS AND WHITES WITH UNEXPECTED SHIMMERY TEXTURES AND BURSTS OF BRIGHT COLORS LIKE FUCHSIA AND ORANGE ADDED IN FOR AN EXCITING TWIST.



DIVINE DINING. The secret to a well-styled tablescape? It's all in the editing. "Clear it off. Put everything on the floor and look at it blank for a minute," Jill says. "When you edit something out, you gain a new perspective. Once you've pared it down, you can focus on what works ... It should be graphic; it should be interesting."



EVERYDAY DETAILS. "Use existing things you already have, decorative boxes, a jar of a few flowers or a tray. Sometimes the color of the book bindings can make it pop. It's like a mini museum and when people come over, they will notice it," says Jill.



BEAUTY BAR. Create a festive drink station with a few simple touches: fruit-infused beverages inside glass decanters with gold trim, cheeky wine bottle tags and some fresh flowers.



"WORK WITH THE PALETTE THAT ALREADY EXISTS," JILL ADVISES.

"IN OUR DINING ROOM WE HAVE POPS OF GOLD AND ORANGE. WE USED A GOLD STARBURST THAT'S ALREADY PART OF THE SPACE. ANYTHING THAT'S FESTIVE AND POPS YOU CAN USE FOR THE HOLIDAYS."

credenza with antique brass hardware and a vintage, rough-hewn console table, create a warm atmosphere. The family room floor was given a gray stain to coordinate with the soft gray walls, while the dining room wood floor was painted with a decorative circle trellis motif Jill designed herself as an alternative to a rug. "My dining room is a pass-through, so there's a lot of traffic," Jill says. "With a rug there you always have to worry about replacing it. This way you don't have to. It's one of the highlights of the home that people always gravitate to."

MIX AND MATCH EVERYDAY AND HOLIDAY DÉCOR

Making the transition to the holidays doesn't take much effort if you rethink holiday décor with colors and motifs you love. For Jill, that means working with the shimmering metallic details and fun accent colors that are with her the rest of the year and conjuring her own holiday look. Rather than traditional reds and greens, Jill incorporated the dreamy hues of pink, orange and blue to create a holiday scene that jives with her everyday décor.

"Work with the palette that already exists," Jill advises. "In our dining room we have pops of gold and orange. We used a gold starburst that's already part of the space. Anything that's festive and pops you can use for the holidays."

Here's her favorite idea for a pretty focal point: Jill adorned round mirrors with wreaths that immediately give them a holiday makeover. Likewise, she brought some


of her existing décor to the holiday theme by adding bowls with ball ornaments to tabletops. Details like faux-magnolia garlands and furry pillows can be used to create a holiday theme, but can also stick around for other seasons.

"One mistake people tend to make is they leave the room the way it is and bring in all of these extra holiday decorations and then the room gets cluttered. It's OK to edit some things out," Jill says.

KEEP IT SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL

The understated elegance of this home is complemented by a few simple flourishes that give it a holiday feel and are all that is really needed.

On the home's exterior, the front door and front step can change with the seasons and holidays to make it inviting to guests. For the holidays, Jill always decorates her door with a lush wreath and puts her own spin on it.

"Magnolia leaves are some of my favorite things to use for the holidays," Jill says. Here, she spray-painted them in gold to form a wreath, tied it with a ribbon and hung it from the front door. She'll also wrap white lights around a bunch of real or faux twigs painted white or silver and slip them into large plant pots. This creates a lighting feature at the front door, where they'll remain all winter. "You don't have to overdo it; just having this one simple wreath on the door says 'holiday'... You can make a statement easily with one thing." 

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 144.

"I KEPT THE BACKDROP VERY SOFT AND NEUTRAL, SO IT HAS AN EASY, AIRY FLOW, CREATING A FEELING OF SPACIOUSNESS, AND LAYERED IN VARIOUS TEXTURES AND COLORS WITH MY FURNISHINGS," JILL SAYS.





CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. A '60s-era credenza fits right in with the holidays, thanks to its starburst hardware. Jill layered a faux-fur wreath over the mirror for a textural focal point. She decided to paint the floors with a trellis pattern in lieu of a rug.





"ONE MISTAKE PEOPLE TEND TO MAKE IS THEY LEAVE THE ROOM THE WAY IT IS AND BRING IN ALL OF THESE EXTRA HOLIDAY DECORATIONS AND THEN THE ROOM GETS CLUTTERED.

IT'S OK TO EDIT SOME THINGS OUT,"
JILL SAYS.

SANTA TAKES A BREAK. The living room features an original oil painting by Suzanne Beshoff, a local artist. Darci commissioned the painting for the homeowners because they love living on the beach. Loretta had seen the Santa image on a greeting card, and Suzanne came up with her own interpretation of it for the painting.



Christmas

Deck the halls, walls and everything else in seaside holiday style.

on the Coast

BY MERYL SCHOENBAUM • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM • STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES



SITTING AROUND. The floral-blue ottoman in this circular sitting area was made with Ralph Lauren fabric. The apple-green tray was custom made to match the furniture. Loretta found the red and white striped pitcher, and both she and Darci were excited that it perfectly complemented the room's décor.

Red and green

—when it comes to decorating for Christmas, this traditional color scheme is a no-brainer. But what if your mind has conjured up other colors? Is it still possible to capture the spirit of the season with nontraditional hues?

Interior designer Darci Goodman was contacted by the owners of this Nantucket-style, three-story home in Manhattan Beach, California, to help them find creative ways to decorate for their favorite holiday without replacing the nautical color palette they enjoy the rest of the year.

With its beautiful ocean view and short walk to the sand, the home's location gave Darci much inspiration to draw from. "The homeowners, Darryl and Loretta Nyznyk, called me two months before Christmas to help them find bright and happy decorations that would fit in with their nautical colors," Darci says. "They wanted the décor to be colorful and to be able to incorporate furniture, window coverings and paint colors from their previous home."

HOLIDAY TRADITION WITH A TWIST

Christmas is the Nyznyks' favorite holiday, and the house lends itself to large family gatherings, when they invite between 30 and 40 people for a traditional Ukrainian Christmas dinner. Guests sit down to a tablescape of blue, red and white dishes and linens that are every bit as festive as their more traditional counterparts.

Darci describes the home's holiday décor as being "coastal, nautical and whimsical." Colorful beach posters and signs line the walls, crisp navy-blue and white striped bedding evokes a nautical look, and a commissioned painting of Santa sitting on the beach adds a whimsical seaside touch.

SWEET SPOT. This adorable little area features a custom-made dining chair and side table. Small trees are a great way to spread Christmas cheer into every space.



BEACH DÉCOR. The sun and ocean were the inspirations for the living room's color palette. The draperies, sisal rug, sofa, pillows and sectional sofa were custom made. Loretta found the painting of a beach scene on a trip to Nantucket.





BLUE CHRISTMAS. The draperies in the living room were custom made with Ralph Lauren fabric. The coffee table is also custom made in black with a glass top and bamboo legs. The sisal rug is bound in black leather. The 10' x 8' sectional sofa was made to provide seating for many guests.

"Loretta has a fabulous eye for detail. We had a really fun working relationship," Darci says. "We kept the decorations contemporary, bright and happy, not glittery or vintage."


MASON-JAR CAKES. These treats are a fun party favor. Loretta uses red tulips—a winter staple—as her signature holiday floral.

PAST & PRESENT

The '70s-style kitchen required the most work, as it needed to be updated. White subway tiles and glass tiles were placed on the backsplashes, and new cabinets were added for a clean, contemporary look.

The owners wanted the same paint colors as they had in their previous house, which had been showcased in a local home tour. The furniture from their other home needed to be configured for the new rooms.





GUESTS SIT DOWN TO
A TABLESCAPE OF
BLUE, RED AND WHITE
DISHES AND LINENS THAT
ARE EVERY BIT AS FESTIVE AS
THEIR MORE TRADITIONAL
COUNTERPARTS.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE. A fresh take on the traditional Christmas place setting includes blue and white dishes set on a wicker charger. In the upper-right corner is a blue and white floral bowl the homeowner bought in Italy. She found a tiny stocking to put utensils in for a creative touch. "Red and blue work well together; red makes you think of Christmas. Polka dots are whimsical," Darci says.

A FEAST FOR THE EYES. Custom-made accessories, such as the chair cushions and furniture made from old wood, give the holiday table a unique quality. The bowl holding the poinsettia is a large vintage Chinese black washbasin.



NAUTICAL NIGHT. This bedroom features a Pottery Barn headboard, which was later painted navy blue. The poster is a replica of a vintage travel poster.



ROOM TO WRITE. This office space features a massive desk that was custom made by a local furniture builder. A wainscot backboard adds cottage charm. The bamboo-style chair was handcrafted by Redford House.




"Every item in the house was custom made, except for a Pottery Barn piece," Darci says. "The furniture has traditional lines; the upholstery is more contemporary. We punched up the color with pillows."

Adding personal touches to the holiday décor was easy, as the homeowners have a lot of family photos to display throughout the rooms. Most of the art consists of pieces they collected on their travels to Nantucket and Carmel, an artsy coastal enclave further north from their area. Loretta also collects bathing-beauty accessories, so those added to the seaside charm.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Although the remodeling was kept to a minimum, as with any home project there were a couple of workarounds necessary. "The master bedroom had a metal fireplace right in the middle of it," Darci explains. "We had it removed, as it was literally an obstacle."






"THE FURNITURE HAS
TRADITIONAL LINES;
THE UPHOLSTERY IS MORE
CONTEMPORARY."

BLUE BEAUTY. As refreshing as a dip in the ocean, the color palette of the master bedroom is fresh, yet serene. The draperies on the back wall were bought at Ralph Lauren for the previous house, but when Darci tried to get a matching set for the new house, they were unavailable. So she just trimmed the solid navy-blue draperies on the adjacent wall with the patterned print. The bed and nightstand were custom made. The chair and ottoman are from Ralph Lauren. The black bed frame has bamboo styling. The table lamps are from Jamie Young.



The furniture also presented a puzzle. "When the furniture was delivered, we were faced with how to get the large, custom-made pieces into the upper rooms of a three-story home," Darci says. "A lot of the furniture had to be lifted from the ground floor and hoisted up to the balcony."

But all parties agreed the outcome was worth the effort. "I received the greatest compliment a designer can get when the homeowner took the time and effort to write me a personal letter about how much he loves the house, and loves to have his daughters and their families visit," Darci says. "He wrote that he is so proud of the effort we put in it as a team." 

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 144

HOLIDAY CHEER. A small space at the top of the stairs gets noticed with thoughtful details such as a hand-painted sign and colorful stockings.



BRICK TRICK. This brick wall in the master bedroom was built to be fireproof, though the fireplace was later removed. The vanity has black bamboo styling to match the bed.

Insider Tips

INTERIOR DESIGNER DARCI GOODMAN SHARES HER PRO PERSPECTIVE ON GETTING YOUR DESIGN JUST RIGHT.

- **CONSIDER THE IMPACT.** To stay within the homeowners' decorating budget, I work hard to offer items that I know will meet the budget criteria, but I occasionally offer some great items that will really make a mark. So if they decide they want to go over budget for added impact, they have that option.
- **EMBRACE COLOR.** I am used to using color, and it doesn't scare me. However, if a client prefers more muted designs, I can work in that palette too. My signature touch is to add a bit of black for sophistication and class. I don't like to use a lot, just a few select pieces.
- **TRICK THE EYE.** To make a small room look larger, I like to keep cabinetry white. It expands the perimeter of the room.

OPPOSITE: TINY TREE. A small Manzanita in the entryway is festooned with bright neon ornaments, which reflect the couple's pop art style.





Happy Season

Christmas gets a modern makeover perfect for simplifying the bustling season and making more time for family.

BY JICKIE TORRES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM
STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES AND VICTORIA
VAN VLEAR





"Just like blending our family, it is about **BLENDING THE UNIQUE VINTAGE ITEMS** that are a part of our family history and bringing in the hip modern design that we also embrace."





When

you've found a way to
swap stockings for gift bins,

skip the gift wrap and still have your tree looking stylish, then you might just hold the secret to the holiday season. Jayne Flinn and her husband, Mike, have done just that in their Newport Beach, California, home. When guests walk into their elegantly modern abode on the coast, what they notice first is the spotless, well-edited décor. You sense that this is purposeful—Jayne has made her home a calming respite in the hustle and bustle of the holidays. “The holidays for us are all about family and spending time together,” she says. “We keep the style pretty simple, yet really artsy and fun, so that we can enjoy as much time with the kids as possible.”

MODERN COLOR. “We have a big, fabulous blended family with five children and two dogs,” Jayne laughs. “Every day is a little chaotic with a mix of personalities that are all expressive, unique and full of humor. So the look is very much in keeping with our big, colorful family. We have a lot of fun!”

BE DIFFERENT

Their uniquely stylized take on holiday decorating comes easy to the Jayne and Mike. "We love a pop of color when it comes to holiday décor and lean towards a Technicolor holiday rather than the traditional red and green," she says. "Even with the modern color palette, I love a nod to past generations and use lots of vintage serving trays and vintage napkin rings. They always look great and bring in the family history that we treasure."

SEASONAL SWAPS

It helps that their company, Boxfli, supplies them with a lot of what comes together as the building blocks of their Christmas style. Boxfli, a shipping store, offers shipping services but, more importantly, a line of products and services aimed at making shipping presents a fun affair, including sturdy boxes that come in an array of bright colors and patterns—all the better to reflect the recipient's or giver's personality.

MODERN FLAIR. Charli, one of the family pooches, is perched in a modern bubble chair. Paired with rustic dark wood floors and a cowhide rug, it's easy to see that Jayne's blend of old and new is timeless and fresh.



MIKE AND JAYNE HAVE ALSO TRADED IN
**TRADITIONAL STOCKINGS FOR
SIMPLE BOXES.** NOT ONLY CAN THEY FIT
MORE IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE THIS WAY,
BUT ALSO THEY CAN FIT MORE GIFTS
IN THE BOXES.



TIDINGS OF JOY. "We came up with the fun box 'stockings' that we can cram full of little gifts," Jayne says. "They are really the favorite thing to open, as they are packed with all kinds of funky and funny items, like fortune-telling 8 Balls, lip gloss, back scratchers, selfie sticks, cosmetic bags, watches, socks and gum."





DINNER FOR SEVEN. The old worn pine farm table stands in contrast to the all-white kitchen and simple cabinets, adding a rustic contrast and dose of Jayne's personal style to the space. Modern dining chairs add to the mix.



FESTIVE ACCENTS. Open shelving in the kitchen not only lends the space a chic restaurant-style vibe but also affords easy opportunities to add pops of seasonal style in the room.





RUSTIC CHIC. The table is adorned with a mix of modern milk-glass inspired vases, sparkling wintry accents and a large, lush natural flower arrangement.

They use their myriad boxes not only for presents under the tree but for fun and functional ideas that add color and pop to their festive décor. "Getting the house holiday ready is always time consuming for anyone, but it's fun for me because that means all of the kids will be home soon and we get to spend time together," Jayne says. "I do try to make it easier for Mike and me by skipping some steps since we are both busy at work too. With the printed Boxfli boxes, we don't ever have to wrap a gift. Since there are so many of us in our immediate family, that is a huge time saver."

Mike and Jayne have also traded in traditional stockings for simple boxes. Not only can they fit more in front of the fireplace this way, but also they can fit more gifts in the boxes. "The idea came about when Santa couldn't fit all the odd-sized items in the stockings and then couldn't get them to hang on the mantel—the stockings kept dropping on the floor," Jayne says. "Stockings are a bit problematic sometimes when the stocking stuffers outweigh or are simply too big for the stockings."

TRADITIONAL TOUCHES

It's not all modern minimalism in the Flinn house. Christmas dinner at the antique farm table is a place to honor family traditions and history. Jayne serves dinner with her collection of antique silver trays, and at each place setting is a different antique napkin ring she's collected over the years. "I love a nod to past generations and use lots of vintage serving trays and vintage napkin rings," she says. "Just like blending our family, it is about blending the unique vintage items that are a part of our family history and bringing in the hip modern design that we also embrace." 

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 144





CAKE STANDS AREN'T JUST FOR SWEETS. ADD A SLICE OF FLORAL FOAM TO CREATE A LUSH ARRANGEMENT THAT WILL DRAPE BEAUTIFULLY OVER THE TABLE.

LUSH & LUXE

Red and green aren't the only colors of the season. Create a chic, lush table setting inspired by silver bells and gold stars.

BY SARAH JANE O'KEEFE

STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES AND SARAH JANE O'KEEFE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRY Z. DE KUYPER

INSPIRED BY THE GLISTEN OF FRESHLY FALLEN SNOW

and the beauty of winter, this party setting strikes a delicate balance between natural elements and an array of metallic accents. It celebrates the intricacies and splendor of a season filled with celebrations—an ideal setting for an intimate dinner party, or to ring in the New Year.





SIMPLE, SMALL FRAMES given a coat of gold paint make for eye-catching place cards.



NOT SERVING DRINKS?

ADD CANDLES TO VINTAGE
GLASSWARE FOR A CHIC,
UNIQUE ACCENT.

CLEVER COMBO. Much like the mixed table settings, a menagerie of unique seats makes for a rich and dynamic setting. Opt for varying styles, but make sure the seat heights match so that guests aren't in awkward positions.

LAYER IT ON

Rather than hiding the table's rich wood tones, a runner provides a layer of texture and color while still showing off the earthy finish of the surface. Choose a textile with a wide weave like this chambray—burlap, Dupioni silk or Belgian linen would work well too.

MIX IT UP

Rather than matching all four settings, find variations with the same qualities that complement one another. Two settings are composed of a gold charger with a rippled edge and a simple, modern white plate, while the other two settings have a scalloped-edge wooden charger and a white plate with a gold hobnail rim. The complementary place settings give the table a rich, well-curated feel with personal flair.

LUSH LIFE

The centerpiece is built out from the center of a wide-base candelabra. This simple, contemporary piece gets a glamorous update with gold spray paint—a stunning contrast to the rustic floral arrangement it holds. Composed of pine branches, mixed greenery, eucalyptus, berries, blooms and white roses, even the flowers glisten with the help of a few aptly placed silver bulbs.

Small details in the form of wooden napkin rings, metallic party crackers, polka-dotted wine glasses and gold-rimmed water-glass coasters tie this glistening, wintery table together.



SLICE IT UP! A dish of premade garnishes will let guests further personalize their drinks while adding a fresh squeeze of color to the table.

SETTING THE BAR

Make crafting a cocktail easy by setting up a bar area for guests. A lineup of mixed vintage glasses helps keep track of whose drink is whose—while making for a chic display.

Cocktail shakers are more than practical—they should be pretty too. Metallic accents and modern lines make these shakers design accents.

Finish the bar by setting out a plate of twisted citrus for guests to garnish their drinks with, and be sure to have plenty of cocktail napkins on hand.



THE SEASON to Sparkle

Looking for something extra fun to spice up your holiday look? Try these fresh, fun takes on Christmas décor that really shines.

WRITTEN AND STYLED BY JICKIE TORRES



RAINBOW TREES

Color is the foundation of this look, so pick your favorites in any color but the traditional ones. Here tiny bottlebrush trees come in an array of pastels. Even the green ones are a twist on the traditional hue.

PHOTO BY JICKIE TORRES

PRETTY IN PASTEL

Your centerpiece should be a treasure trove of shimmery gems. Here an oversized mercury-glass kugel forms the base of a cluster of shiny ornaments in sweet sorbet colors. Tuck in glittering holiday picks to soften the base, and be sure your dinnerware has luster of its own to boast.

PHOTO BY JICKIE TORRES



DARLING ADORNMENTS

Sequins are a fun and easy way to update simple votives into a festive display—no sewing required. Simply fill the base of a glass votive, hurricane or even a clear glass tumbler with a few inches of mixed colored sequins—you can buy them by the bin at most craft stores. You can nestle candles into or atop the sequins, or fill each glass with a shiny ornament for a creative way to display your favorites.

PHOTO BY JICKIE TORRES



PHOTO BY HENRY Z. DE KUYPER

PRIZE RING

An iridescent green garland can easily wrap around a wreath form to create holiday dazzle. Just add a contrasting bow and a few flashy pom-poms to complete the fun.



Welcome Home FOR WINTER

Wreaths are the classic way to decorate your entryway for the holidays. These creative looks offer a new twist on that tradition, while infusing your home with festive personal style.

BY JICKIE TORRES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM
STYLING BY JACQUELINE DEMONTRAVEL
AND JICKIE TORRES



A NEW LEAF

Elegant and sophisticated, but with the warmth only a handcrafted item has, this recycled-paper leaf wreath is an unexpected addition to your traditional décor. "As a busy mom, I prefer simple, elegant pieces that can bridge several seasons," artist Dawn Feldman of bubblegumdish.com says. "I wanted something lightweight, with a slim profile, that wouldn't shatter if a little one knocked it loose. Each leaf is hand-scored and shimmers in the light."

◀ SIMPLE & SWEET

Don't stop at gingerbread men when it comes to holiday décor that you bake yourself. Snowflake cookies make a fun motif for a cookie wreath. Glue them together on a flat surface—you can add a stiff cardboard ring form behind it for added strength; then festoon your wreath with a ribbon for a charming look.



SEASHELL BELLE

White shimmery seashells give a snowy look to your coastal Christmas décor. This dense all-shell wreath is a great way to add luxe texture to your Christmas style. When you craft yours, start with a thin wire wreath form. Then create the wreath starting with the biggest shells first and filling in each nook and cranny tightly to create a similar look.

A rustic wreath made of pinecones, hazelnuts, and acorns hangs on a wooden door. The door has painted greenery, including a large pine branch at the top and a smaller one at the bottom. The wreath is circular and densely packed with natural elements. A semi-transparent circular text box is centered over the wreath.

RUSTIC TOUCH

Evergreens aren't the only way to make a wintry statement on the front door. This woody version adds just as much seasonal flair. "This timeless wreath creates a feeling of warmth and tranquility," artist Helen LeSage says of her pinecone-and-nut wreath. For more on her designs, visit itstheholidays.etsy.com.



Merry and

BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR
PROJECTS AND TUTORIAL BY REBECCA
LOPEZ, THE CRAFTED SPARROW
PHOTOGRAPHY BY REBECCA COOPER

Bright

Light up your home with this festive marquee sign.

WHAT'S BETTER ON A COLD, WINTERY NIGHT than a cup of hot cider, mulled wine or hot chocolate? If you're entertaining this year, you may want to set up a sidebar with warm drinks for guests to pick up. Top off the fun with a bright marquee sign to attract guests and tell them where to pick up something to warm their hands, throats and bellies.

“Warm Up Here” MARQUEE SIGN

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Pine board, cut to 8 x 24 inches
- Cricut Explore machine
- Cricut vinyl
- Red acrylic paint or color of your choice
- Foam brush
- Standard Christmas lights
- Drill
- Drill bit (same size as the glass bulbs on the lights)
- Wood spade drill bit (same size as the plastic socket on each light)
- Hot-glue gun and glue
- Electric sander or sandpaper

HOW TO DO IT:

- 1 Make a simple vinyl stencil in Cricut Design Space using the Bebas Neue font. Stretch the design to fit your pine board; then cut out the vinyl stencil.
- 2 Weed your vinyl. To do this, peel the outside away from the letters, as well as any small pieces (such as the triangle inside the A). Discard the excess so only the letters remain.
- 3 Apply the stencil to the pine board with transfer tape. Make sure you center the design and use a small squeegee to remove any air bubbles from the letters.



HOW TO DO IT:

- 4 Paint the surface of the pine board with the acrylic paint. Use the foam brush to paint three solid coats. Remove the vinyl stencil before the last coat is completely dry, or the crisp edges of the paint may peel up with the vinyl.
- 5 Use a pencil to plan where your Christmas lights will go. You can use a ruler or draw the dots freehand.
- 6 Use your regular drill bit to drill through the front of your sign. Be sure to drill on your pencil marks so everything stays even, and drill all the way through to the back of the sign.
- 7 Flip the sign over so it's face down. Use your wood spade drill bit to drill from the back and create little pockets for your bulbs to sit inside. You might want to lay the sign flat on your work surface, which will keep the drill bit from going all the way through to the front of the sign. Otherwise, you'll have to worry about not going all the way through for each hole.
- 8 Once all the holes have pockets, use a sander or piece of sandpaper to smooth down the wood on the back.
- 9 Insert all the bulbs into your board. Secure each bulb in place with a small daub of hot glue to the back of the sign.
- 10 Hang the sign with jute twine or sawtooth hangers.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A CRICUT EXPLORE MACHINE, YOU CAN STILL MAKE THE SIGN. SIMPLY USE PRECUT STENCILS TO DESIGN YOUR LETTERS ON CARDSTOCK; THEN CUT THEM OUT AND SECURE THEM TO THE SIGN.

[For more of Rebecca's projects, visit thecraftedsparrow.com.]

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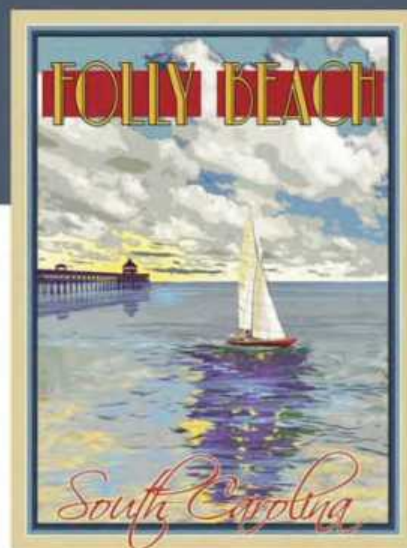
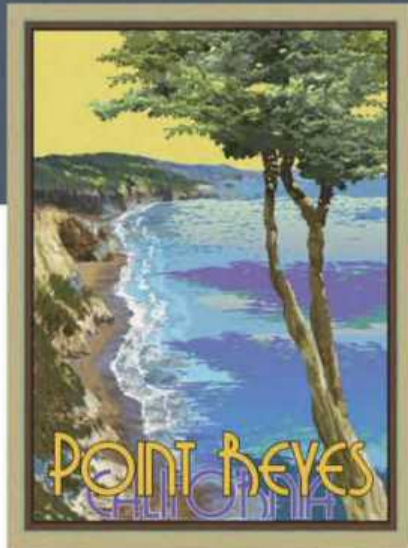
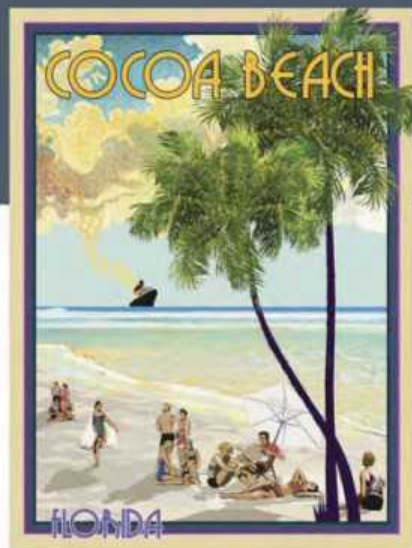
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Branching *Out*

Reinvent your Christmas tree with dazzling and unconventional thematic décor that lights up lives as much as living rooms.

AS THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF YEAR KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR, it's easy to let what's beneath the Christmas tree capture a little too much of our attention, while the tree itself gets pared down to a tinsel-studded afterthought. By consigning our Christmas trees to a seasonal footnote, we are missing a valuable opportunity to demonstrate what this time of year really represents to each of us. Carrie Brown's *The New Christmas Tree* aspires to reinvigorate our relationship with these decorated evergreens by empowering us to take our ever-evolving, wonderfully particular interpretations of Christmas and apply them to the welcoming canvas of pine needles and branches. Brown, who is also the owner of the renowned Jimtown Store in Sonoma County wine country, encourages us to "think of the Christmas tree as a springboard to reinvention." Here are our picks of Brown's delightful designs to help inspire you.

BY MARIA BARUXIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAIGE GREEN
STYLING BY CARRIE BROWN

Simply *Scandinavian*

If your inner child craves a return to enchantment, borrow inspiration from the brothers Grimm and piece together a Christmas tree that resonates with your own version of "Once upon time."

This tree draws from northern European traditions, highlighting darling elements of Swedish art and lore. The block-printed rose and heart kurbits on balsa wood add a handcrafted tenderness. As for the cookie ornaments, they evoke the stuff of fables with their emblematic shapes. Toadstool baubles, straw ornaments and a vintage folk-art tree stand round out the array, making it the perfect habitat for elves, gnomes and other fairy folk.



Folk Artist

With so much color, vitality and down-to-earth worldliness, this tree speaks to the cosmopolitan and Arcadian spirit alike. Besides its vibrancy and honest charm, the motif is adaptable to many cultures. Embrace one tradition to give your display a measure of concentrated depth, or include a survey of handicrafts from around the world to add kaleidoscopic interest. Focus on incorporating an engaging medley of textures and materials: straw and tin, yarn and clay. The layers will endow the tree with rich, rustic nuance.



Bee a Star

Queen bees and sweet naturalists looking for earthy style, look no further. To replicate this buzz-worthy display, try a fan-shaped arrangement of rosemary in a brass urn. From there, you can add any assortment of homemade ornaments including hexagonal beeswax pendants, felt honeybees, honey vials and beeswax dipped ornaments. But there's no doubt that your tree's showstopper will be that beeswax crown topper! (A template of the crown is available on artisanbooks.com: see The New Christmas Tree).

Bonus:

Jars of good, local honey can make ideal gifts that reflect the theme. Attach antennae armatures to the jars for an additional flourish.

Terrific *Type*

English majors, ink-slingers and all people of letters, rejoice! Here's a Christmas tree that could literally have your name on it. The Typography Tree offers a compelling way to communicate your own special connection to Christmas. Spell out messages to loved ones, or display any words you personally associate with the season. You hold all the power of the printed word to make this graphic tree distinctly you. Mix fonts and sizes for signature effect. Tip: Wrapping presents with newspaper is a fun way to stretch the typographic theme.



Here's the Upside

The sophisticated risk taker is a rare breed, but if you fancy yourself a maven of unconventional refinement, why not turn things a bit upside down this Christmas? This original approach to the classic tree luxuriates in theatrical inversion, availing the tree of gravity to garner gravitas, all while homespun tulle and yarn snowballs hang in joyful reminiscence of snow. Don't forget to attach a little glitz with the jeweled cranberry garlands and delicate seed lights. Bringing this concept home will see your Yuletide display reaching new heights.



The New Christmas Tree by Carrie Brown, published by Artisan Books, © 2015; artisanbooks.com.



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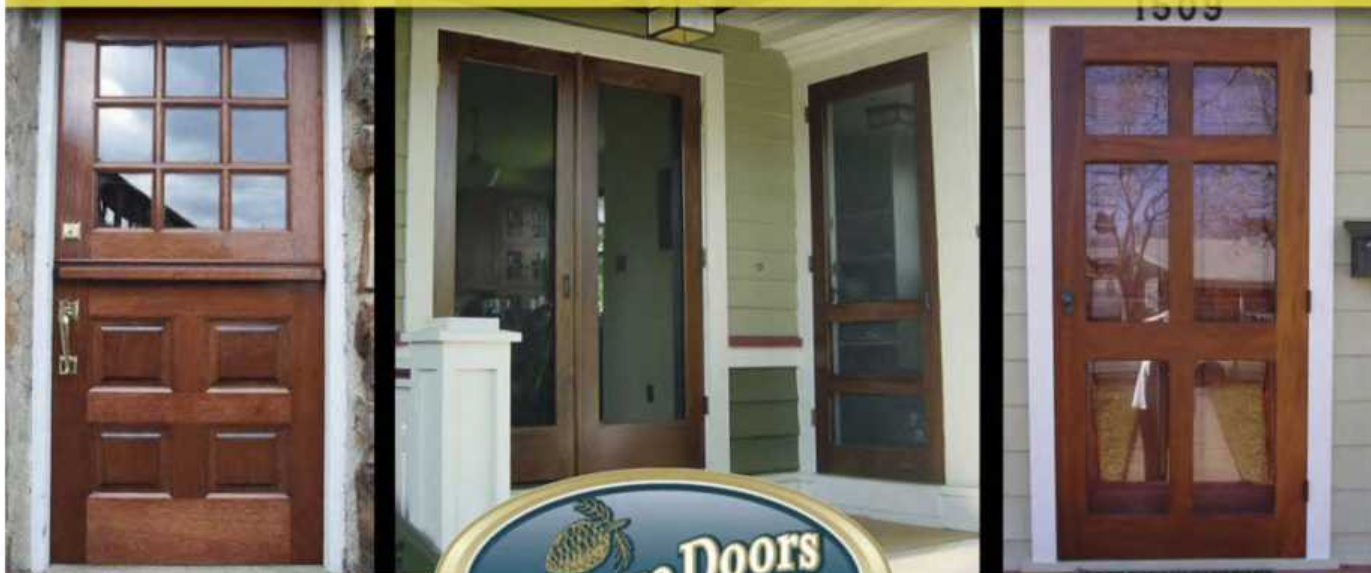
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CHRISTMASTIME IS HERE

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For more on Alison Kandler's work, visit alisonkandler.com.

Kitchen countertops: Caesarstone color 2200, (877) 978-2789 or caesarstoneus.com.

Counter stools: Pottery Barn, (888) 779-5176 or potterybarn.com.

Range: Lacanche French Ranges, visit frenchranges.com.

Kitchen backsplash: Adex, (305) 513-4633 or adexusa.com.

Roman shade fabric in kitchen and family room, living room white sofa fabric: Kravet, visit kravet.com.

Bathroom tiles: Ann Sacks, visit annsacks.com.

Breakfast room chairs: Janus et Cie, (310) 652-7090 or janusetcie.com.

Breakfast room fixture: Pierre Frey, visit pierrefrey.com.

Breakfast room sconces: Circa Lighting, (877) 762-2323 or circalighting.com.

Fireplace tile: Country Floors, (310) 657-0510 or countryfloors.com.

Pillows on white sofa: Peter Fasano, (413) 528-6872 or peterfasano.com.



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Master bath tub: Cheviot Products, (604) 464-8966 or cheviotproducts.com.

Master bathroom wallpaper: Farrow & Ball, visit farrow-ball.com.

Christmas flower arrangements: BloomNation, visit bloomnation.com. Westwood Flower Garden, visit westwoodflowergarden.com.

HOME WITHIN A HOME

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For more on Dave Spolnik and Sprout Studios, (705) 224-4743 or sproutstudios.ca.

Builder: Veitch Custom Builders, (519) 575-6041 or veitchcontracting.ca.

Interior design: Cornerstone Home Interiors, (416) 767-8170 or cornerstonefurniture.ca.

Countertops: Paperstone, (360) 538-1480 or paperstoneproducts.com.



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HOLIDAY GLAMOUR

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For more on Jill Kalman's designs, visit bella-interiors.com.

Drink dispensers: Terrain, (877) 583-7724 or shopterrain.com.

Custom dining room floor design and sofa: Bella Interiors, 203-645-1561 or bella-interiors.com.

Chandelier: Jonathan Adler, (800) 963-0891 or jonathanadler.com.

Dining chairs: Restoration Hardware, (800) 762-1005 or restorationhardware.com.

Candy jars: Amazon, visit amazon.com.

"Joy" sign; Nate Berkus for Target round mirrored tray and gold vase: Target, (800) 591-3869 or target.com.

Buffet: Global Views, (888) 956-0030 or globalviews.com.

Mirrored chest: Lillian August, (855) 576-4144 or lillianaugust.com.

White horse, mantel décor, holiday décor, Magnolia leaf in gold and vintage Paris coffee table: Dovecote Westport, (203) 222-7500 or dovecote-westport.com.

White and gold chairs and upholstered bench: Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, (617) 266-0075 or mgbwhome.com.

Wall painting: Helen Werngren, (203) 918-6800 or helenwerngren.com.

CHRISTMAS ON THE COAST

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For more on interior designer Darci Goodman of Darci Goodman Interior Design Consultants, (714) 350-7338 or darcigoodmandesign.com.

All paints: Dunn Edwards, visit dunnedwards.com.

Bedroom (headboard): Pottery Barn (painted in navy-blue paint), visit potterybarn.com.

Bedding, striped and anchor pillows, living room draperies and valance, blue ottoman fabric, master bedroom draperies, chair and ottoman: Ralph Lauren, visit ralphlauren.com.

Bamboo-style chair: Redford house, visit redfordhouse.com.

Dining-room chandelier: Santa Barbara Lights, visit santabarbaralights.com.

Master bedroom table lamps: Jamie Young, visit jamieryoung.com.

HAPPY SEASON

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Boxes, ornaments, stocking stuffers: Boxfli, visit boxfli.com.

Skateboard: Kryptonics Original Torpedo Skateboard, visit amazon.com.

Cakes: Present cake: Cinderella Cakes, visit cinderellacakes.com.

Chocolate snowman: Timorie's Candies, visit timoriescandies.com.

Felt stacked star ornament, bell wreaths, Christmas tree tea lights: Laura Ashley, visit lauraashleyusa.com.

Patterned pillows: Missoni, visit missonihome.com.

Milk-glass vases with gold trim, silver glittery berries: Hobby Lobby, visit hobbylobby.com.

LUSH & LUXE

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Gold chargers, wood chargers, white plates, party crackers, green napkins and silver cocktail shaker: World Market, (877) 967-5362 or worldmarket.com.

Gold polka-dot wine glasses, gold hobnail rimmed plates, mirrored cocktail shaker and gold tray: Home Goods, visit homegoods.com.

Stemless wine glasses, small picture frame and amber cake stand: Marshalls, visit marshalls.com.

Gray chair and animal fur: TJ Maxx, visit tjmaxx.com.

Cocktail glasses, candleholder, wooden napkin rings and black chair: Vintage.

White ottoman and silver bulbs: Target, visit target.com.

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Is it here yet?


Celebrate the anticipation of Christmas with a sweet countdown.

BY SARAH JANE O'KEEFE
PHOTO BY IPC MEDIA

COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS is a simple, pure joy that can be embraced by family members of all ages. Rather than using an Advent calendar of the cardboard pop-out variety, deck the halls with this cheerful, colorful and easy-to-personalize version.

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Turn candy-cane-inspired scrapbooking paper into cones by twisting the paper into shape and affixing tape to the seam. Fold the excess corner of paper down into the cone before adding a numbered sticker to the front.

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FILLED TO THE BRIM. Stuff your cones with miniature ornaments, craft supplies, small toys, cookie cutters and silly surprises like fuzzy stick-on mustaches. Before filling a cone with baked goods or candies, add a liner of wax paper to prevent any oily splotches on the cone.



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